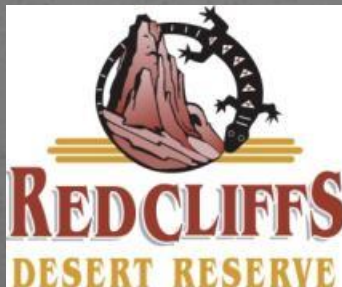


# 20 Years Under the Washington County Habitat Conservation Plan

Presentation to the Washington County Habitat Conservation Advisory  
Committee

March 22, 2016



# Timeline - Washington County HCP

1989 – Mojave desert tortoise listed by USFWS.

1990 - Steering committee formed by Washington Co.

1995 - Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) submitted

1996 - HCP signed &  
ITP issued

2016 – Expiration (3/14)  
& renewal?

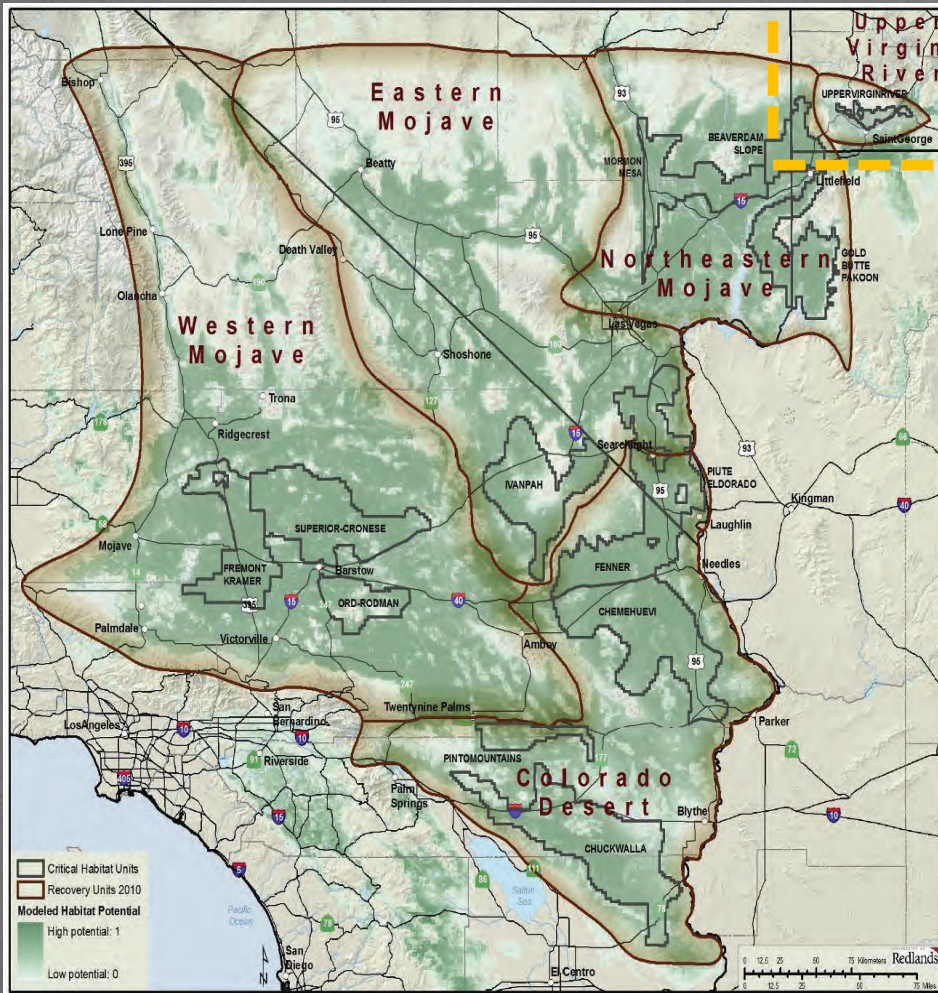




# Upper Virgin River Recovery Area

## This Recovery Unit:

- Northeastern most distribution of desert tortoises
- Represents only 1% of all units
- Supports a very dense tortoise population ( $18 \text{ tortoises/km}^2$ )





# Tortoise Management Summary



- HCP staff have processed 900 tortoises since 1996
- Approximately 713 “take”
- 500+ translocated or returned back into the Reserve
- Approximately 101 “captives”
  - 58 have been adopted

# Population Monitoring

## Line Distance Sampling

### 1999 Reserve Estimates:

- 27.3 tortoises/km<sup>2</sup>
- 3130 tortoises

### 2011 Reserve Estimates:

- 18.2 tortoises/km<sup>2</sup>
- 2082 tortoises

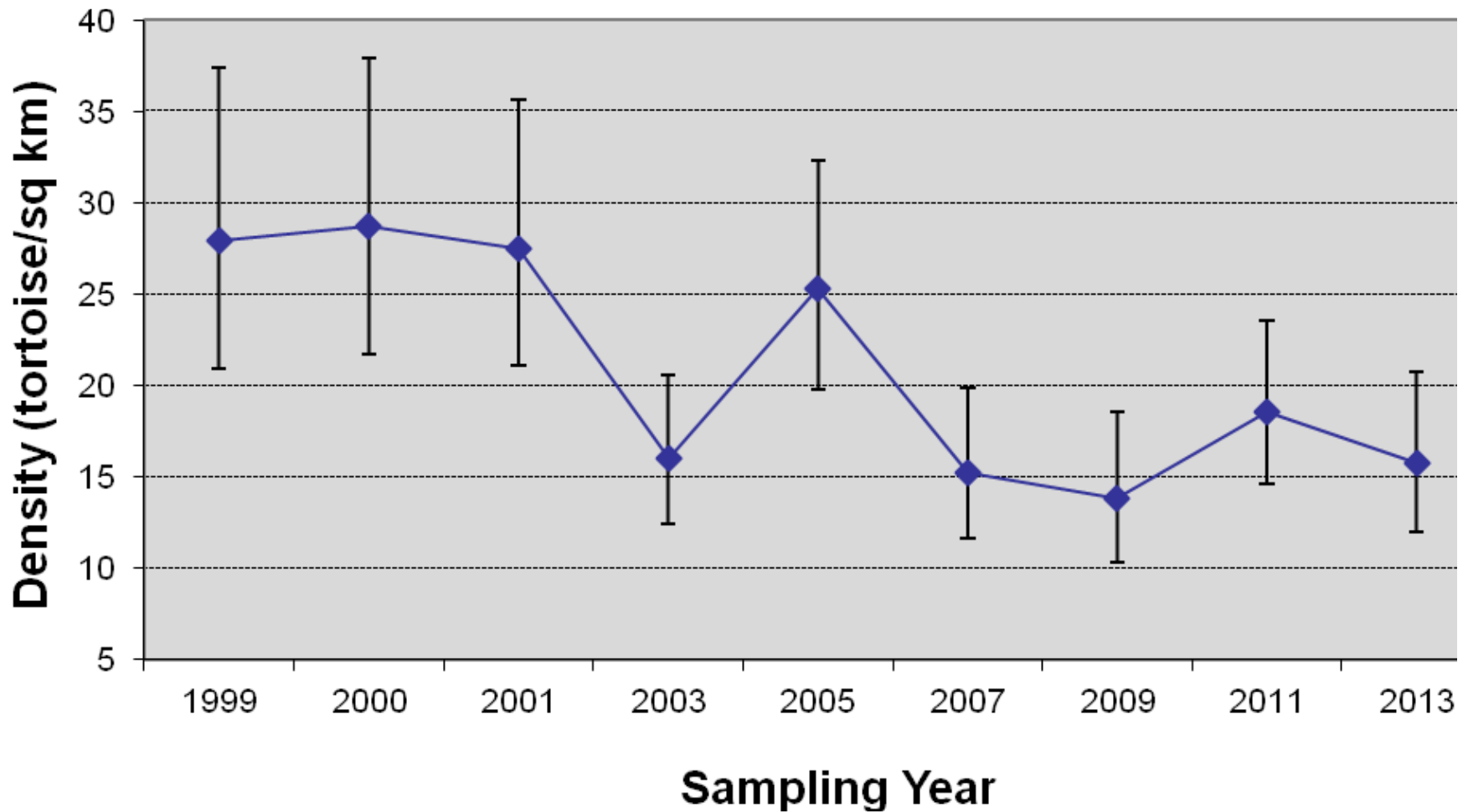


### Other Recovery Unit Statistics:

- NE Mojave: Population increase
- Colorado Desert: 36% decline
- W. Mojave: 51% decline
- E Mojave: 67% decline
- Upper Virgin R: 27%



# Tortoise Population Trend 1999-2013



# Translocation Success





# Washington County HCP Signatories



- Washington County
- US Fish & Wildlife Service

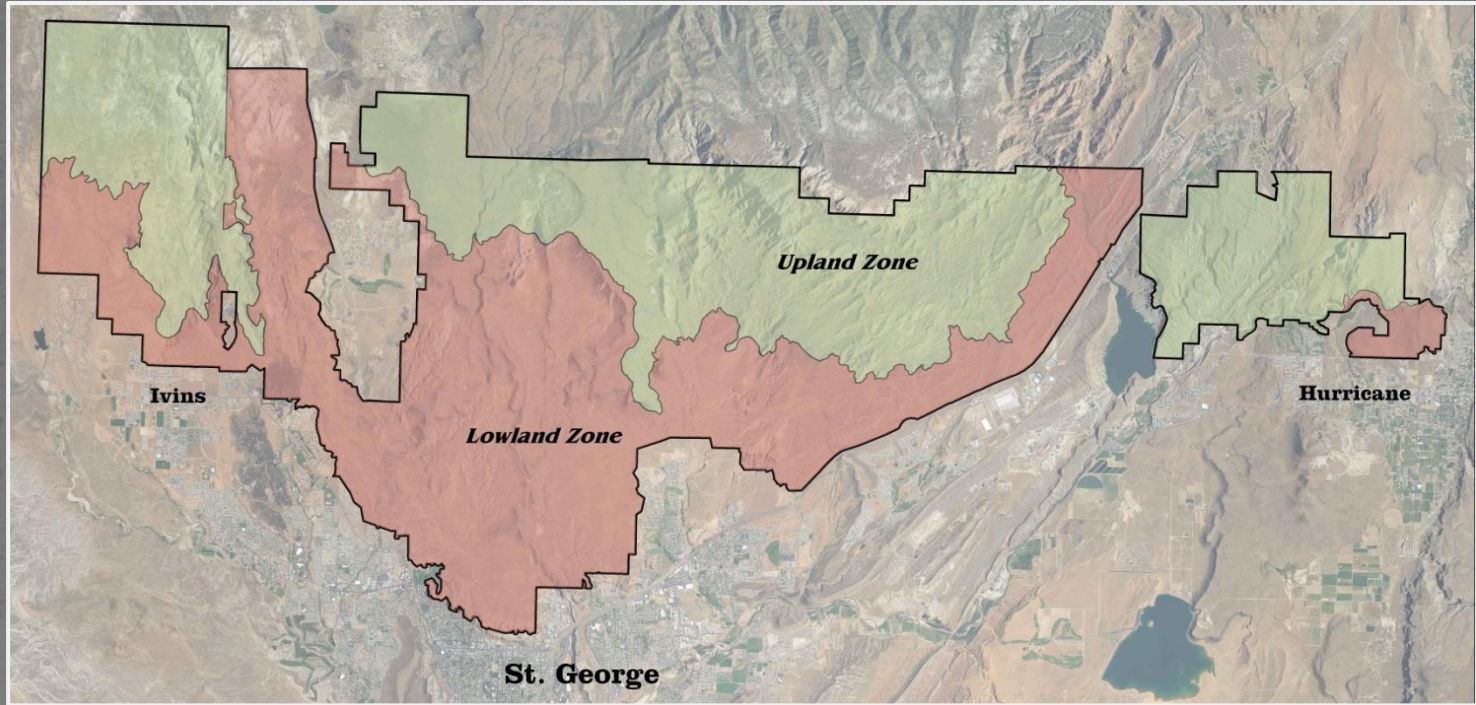


- Bureau of Land Management
- Utah Division of Wildlife Resources & State Parks
- Ivins City





# HCP Resulted In:



- Creation of Red Cliffs Desert Reserve
  - Approximately 62,000 acres
  - $\approx$  50% Desert tortoise habitat

# HCP Resulted In:



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

## FEDERAL FISH AND WILDLIFE PERMIT

### 1. PERMITTEE

WASHINGTON COUNTY  
197 EAST TABERNACLE  
ST. GEORGE

UT 84770

E. The Permittee is authorized to take (kill, harm, harass, etc., as defined in the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA)) up to 1,169 desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*) incidental to otherwise lawful activities including, but not limited to, grading or other earth-moving activities for construction and development projects on up to 12,264 acres of Mojave desert tortoise habitat on non-Federal land in Washington County, Utah, and on all other non-Federal land in Washington County outside the Beaver Dam Slope area designated as desert tortoise habitat on the date of this permit, as more fully described in the Permittee's Federal fish and wildlife permit application and the WCHCP.

PERMIT INVALID WITHOUT ATTACHED CONDITIONS.



# Signatory Responsibilities

## Washington County

- Coordinate reserve management
- Funding
- Enforcement of permit
- Use best efforts to ensure federal and state acquisition of private inholdings

## BLM

- Work to gain title to private inholdings
- Exchange public lands outside of reserve for private inholdings
- Assist in reserve management

# Signatory Responsibilities

## UDNR

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- Assist in reserve management
- Pursue Section 6 funds
- Provide expertise

## USFWS

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- Conduct research and analysis
- Provide technical assistance



# Washington County Funding

EXPENSE	COMMITMENT	EXPENDITURE
FENCING	\$500,000; 71 MILES	\$804,104; 83 MILES
LAW ENFORCEMENT	\$650,000 - 5 YRS	\$1,271,941 - 19 YRS
EDUCATION	\$500,000	\$709,301
TRANSLOCATION	\$240,000	\$212,461
FACILITATE ACQUISITION & EXCHANGE	\$500,000	\$442,579
LWCF GRANT MATCH	\$1,000,000	N/A
HCP ADMINISTRATOR	\$1,080,000	\$1,662,450
HCP BIOLOGIST	\$760,000	\$1,132,909
OFFICE & SECRETARIAL	\$400,000	\$1,318,339

# Washington County Funding

EXPENSE	COMMITMENT	EXPENDITURE
RESERVE MANAGEMENT-BLM FUNDING	\$250,000 OVER 10 YRS	\$250,000 FOR PUBLIC USE PLAN
RESERVE MANAGEMENT – UDNR FUNDING	\$50,000	\$50,000 TO SCSP TORTOISE MANAGEMENT PLAN
RESERVE MONITORING	\$1,000,000	\$1,199,004
GRAZING PERMITS	\$175,000 FOR 4 GRAZING PERMITS	ALL 4 PERMITS AT \$157,005
OTHER SPECIES	1,950,000	\$1,371,966
<b>TOTAL COMMITMENTS</b>	<b>\$9,055,000</b>	<b>\$10,582,059</b>



# Additional County Actions

- OHVs / ATVs prohibited in the Reserve
- Grazing – retired allotments - 30,725 acres
- Habitat restoration – city dump, re-seeded old roads/trails, fire rehabilitation
- Trail Steward and other volunteer programs



# Fencing

- Washington County HCP has built / improved 85 miles of fencing along Reserve boundary and roads
- Tortoise exclusionary fence - 66 miles
- Endangered plants fencing – 20 miles





# Education / Outreach

## Tortoise Awareness

- 200+ presentations
- 2500+ attendees

## Presentations:

- 698 presentations
- 63,000+ attendees



## Events:

- County Fair
- Mojave Max
- Jr. Ranger (2 events / yr)
- Earth Day – Zion NP

# Internet Resources



- Purpose of HCP
- Tortoise Info
- Trail and hiking information
- Videos of tortoises and other wildlife



# Land Acquisition in the Reserve



# Key Acquisition Numbers

• 7,671 --Private and municipal acres in 1996

• 1,288 --Private acres

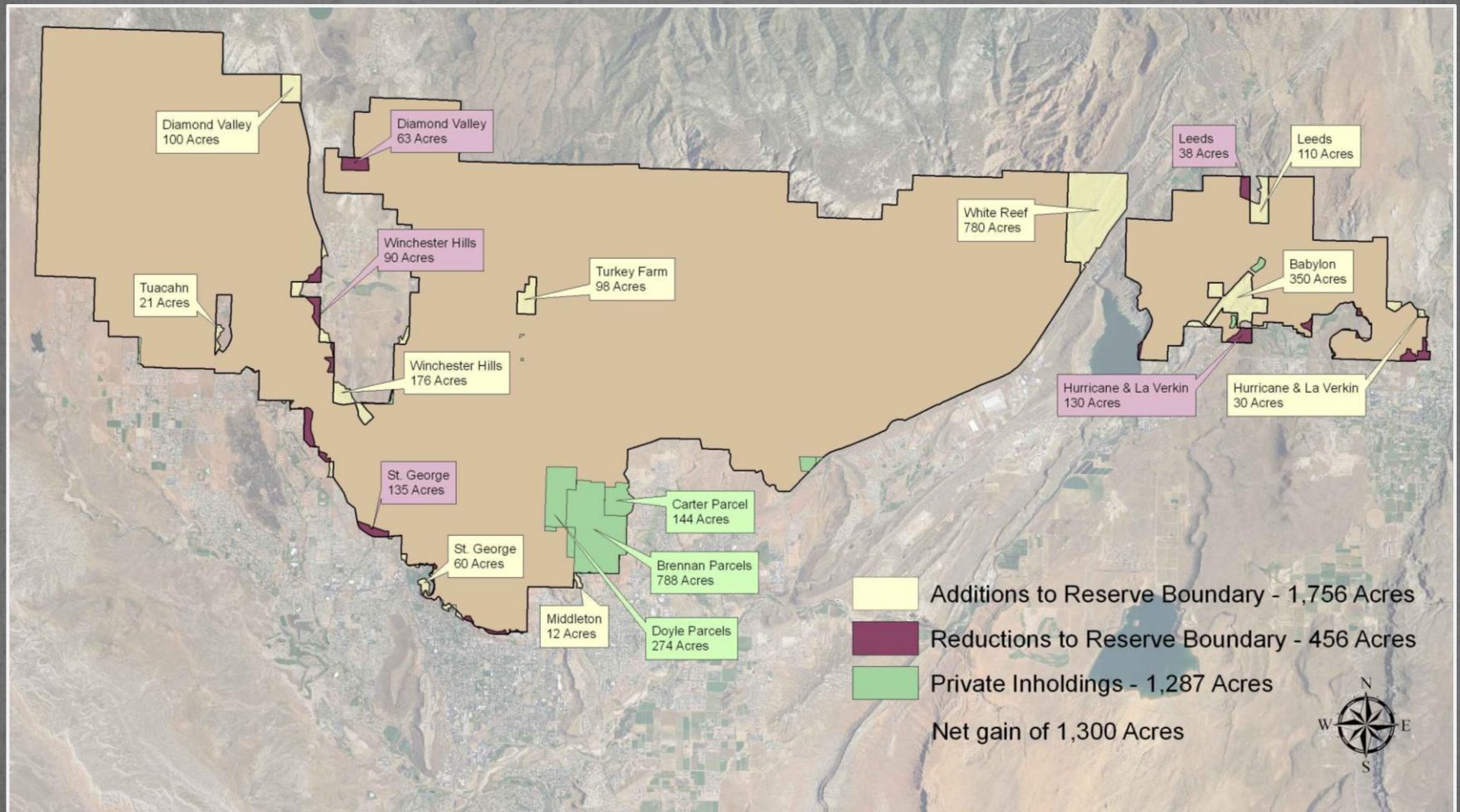


• 10,938 --School Trust Land acres in 1996

• 6,495 --School Trust Land acres remaining



# 1,300 Acres Added to the Reserve







The Washington  
County HCP is a  
Success Story that  
Should be  
“Permitted” to  
Continue